

IV. The fourth condition of worthy participation is faith in God's Word to us in the Supper.

By a visible word, a physical word, a word addressed to our physical senses, God gives us a promise, a pledge, an assurance of the forgiveness of our sins. In Matthew 26:28, at the institution of His Supper, our Lord said, "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

When we trust in Christ as our Savior and receive His broken body and shed blood for our salvation, we receive the forgiveness of sins. And when we trust God's written Word to us, we receive assurance of the forgiveness of sins.

Christ's atoning death provides forgiveness; God's written Word provides assurance of forgiveness.

Just as we receive God's written Word in faith and are assured of the forgiveness of our sins, so we receive God's visible Word in the Supper and are further assured of the forgiveness of our sins.

As we receive the elements in faith as symbols of Christ's broken body and shed blood, we receive additional assurance that our sins are forgiven.

In His grace God condescends to our present existence in physical bodies and gives us a visible, physical word: "This is My body . . . This is my blood."

These then are four conditions of worthy participation in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper:

First, saving faith in Christ

Second, discernment of the spiritual significance of the Supper

Third, confession of sin

Fourth, faith in God's Word to us in the Supper